

LINCOLN LORE

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THE PERFECT TRIBUTE

The death of Mrs. Mary Shipman Andrews in October, 1936, removed from the fellowship of Lincoln authors one who contributed much to the general appreciation for the Gettysburg Address. Her book "The Perfect Tribute" has a tender and sympathetic appeal which is seldom excelled although it cannot be accepted as historically accurate.

The remarkable popularity which the book still enjoys has made it one of the leading if not the best of all time sellers in the field of Lincoln literature. Through the courtesy of the Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers of the book, we are able to give a schedule of its various editions and printings.

Magazine Edition

The story first appeared in Scribner's Magazine for the month of July, 1906. While it was not given a position of preference over other manuscripts it did furnish the theme for the frontispiece, a drawing by F. Walter Taylor, portraying Lincoln seated by the bed of a southern soldier in a Washington hospital.

First Edition

Shortly after the magazine article appeared, the story was sent to the press without any revision and was printed in August, 1906, and made ready for publication in September. The title page bears this inscription.

THE PERFECT TRIBUTE

by

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews
NEW YORK

Chas. Scribner's Sons

On the back of the title page and underneath the copyright notice is the line *Published, September, 1906*, and near the bottom of the page the imprint, *The Trow Press, New York*.

Five thousand and seventy-five copies of this first edition were printed.

Regular Editions

The first edition of the book was immediately exhausted, which made it necessary to make another printing of 5,000 copies, released on October 15, and still another 5,000 on December 19. In the first three months of its appearance, over 15,000 copies had been issued. Seven different printings were made in 1907, most of them in 5,000 lots, totaling in all about 38,000 copies. In 1908, the publishers began increasing the volume of each printing to 10,000 lots, and by the end of the Lincoln centennial year, 1909, more than 78,000 copies had been sold.

The most remarkable fact about the distribution of the publication is the regularity with which the book has been reprinted from year to year. From the time of its first issue in 1906 up to 1929, with but one exception, not a single year passed without another 10,000 edition coming from the press and in some years twice that amount. The total of the regular editions of the book has now reached 367,344 volumes and the book its still in demand.

Centenary Edition

Anticipating the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, February 12, 1909, the publishers prepared in November, 1908, the Centenary Edition of the book. It appeared in a cloth binding and a larger format, pages 5½" x 8½". The new edition used a photogravure frontispiece showing President Lincoln seated in a chair in a tent on the battlefield of Antietam. The edition also had a decorative border of brown ink around each page. Only 6,300 copies of this edition were printed.

School Edition

The intense interest aroused in Lincoln during the centennial year prompted in 1910 the publication of a cheaper edition for school use. The

title page, similar to the past edition, was retained, but above the cover title is the inscription, *School Memorial Edition for Lincoln Day*. A limp cloth cover was used and a wood cut frontispiece further identified it.

This edition has also had a wide distribution, the first printing reaching 50,000 copies. It is continually being reprinted with the last issue of 5,000 copies coming from the press on February 6, of last year. The total for this edition now reaches 121,670.

Memorial Edition

At the time the School Edition appeared in 1910, the Lincoln Memorial University at Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, distributed the school edition of "The Perfect Tribute" with an added paper cover. Under the caption "The Perfect Tribute," there appeared the words, "Lincoln Memorial University," and following this caption a twelve line word description of the university. The cover pages of the book contain letters to the university from prominent Americans.

Gift Edition

One other edition of "The Perfect Tribute" has been published, called the Gift Edition. It was first issued on October 8, 1926. It displays as a frontispiece a woodcut by Wilfred Jones after the drawing by F. Walter Taylor, used in the regular edition. The format is also changed with the pages 5½" x 7½" and the decorations on the printed pages are in blue ink, also a bright red caption sticker is placed on the stiff board cover. There have been printed thus far 3,125 copies of this edition.

Summary

It will be observed from the totals submitted representing these various editions, there has been one-half a million copies of the book published. It is doubtful if any other Lincoln book has had such a popular run.